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AUTHOR	Hj:Zainuddin, Tormodi Bin
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ABSTRACT

This document, a summary of a master's thesis in extension education, analyzes the relationship of selected factors with the academic performance of Malaysian students enrolled at Louisiana State University. Data were collected by mail questionnaire from all Malaysian students with a diploma in agriculture who were enrolled at the university in fall 1973. Grade-point averages were obtained from the College of Agriculture and Graduate School. Major findings indicated that with a grade-point average of 3.18, Malaysian students had a fairly good academic performance. Earlier enrollees and graduate students had a significantly higher academic performance than later enrollees and undergraduates, indicating that students who had more time to adjust to the social and learning environment performed better than those students who recently enrolled. Characteristics of students enrolled for more than one year and students enrolled for less than one year are included. (MJM)

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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN STUDENTS AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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by

Tormodi Bin Hj:Zainuddin

A summary of an M.S. thesis in Extension Education under the supervision of Dr. Satish Verma, Louisiana State University, May, 1974.

A copy of the complete thesis is on file in the main library at Louisiana State University.

R & T--Summary No. 55

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Significance of the Study

Foreign students enrolled in an American University share certain unique socio-cultural and psychological problems. For most of them, it is the first time that they leave their home country to come and live in a different environment. They have to adjust to this new environment, socially and academically, and this takes some time. Study of this phenomenon of adjustment was considered to be important in terms of educational planning.

The author was interested in Malaysian students and undertook to study their academic performance at Louisiana State University, and to relate performance to various selected factors. There were 123 Malaysian students enrolled at the University in the Fall semester 1973. This group was considered to be fairly homogenous and representative of Malaysian students in general, particularly those majoring in the field of agriculture. It was hoped that the findings from the study would be helpful for future educational planning by the Louisiana State University and sponsoring agencies and students in Malaysia.

Purpose of the Study

The major objective of the study was to analyze the relationship of selected factors with the academic performance of Malaysian students enrolled at Louisiana State University.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To analyze differences in the academic performance of later and earlier enrollees at the University, and
2. To relate these differences to the following major categories

of variables:

a. Personal and family characteristics.

b. Curricular activities.

c. Extra-curricular activities.

d. Social participation.

Methodology

Data were collected by mail questionnaire from all Malaysian students with a Diploma in Agriculture, who were enrolled at the University in Fall 1973. Realizing that time plays an important role in adjustment, the students were divided into earlier (Fall 1972 and before) and later enrollees (Spring 1973 and after) for determining differences in academic performance. Their grade point averages were obtained from the College of Agriculture and Graduate School. Least squares regression and simple linear correlation were the statistical procedures used. The lowest level of significance used was .25.

Major Findings

With a grade point average of 3.18, Malaysian students had a fairly good academic performance. Earlier enrollees and graduate students had a significantly higher academic performance than later enrollees and undergraduates indicating that students who had had more time to adjust to the social and learning environment, performed better than those students who were recently enrolled.

From the standpoint of statistical significance, students with the following characteristics had a higher academic performance that their counterparts:

Earlier Enrollees (Enrolled for more than a year)

1. Students 24 years of age and less.
2. Students with families in Malaysia.
3. Those who were not the eldest in the family.
4. Urban dwellers.
5. Students with no means of private transportation.
6. Those who did not like their living accommodation.
7. Students who studied alone.
8. Students who had no difficulty in understanding subjects.
9. Those who did put in good effort in study.
10. Those who participated less in University organizations.
11. Students who were not employed part-time.
12. Students who dated infrequently.

Later Enrollees (Enrolled for less than a year)

1. Female students.
2. Those majoring in non-plant/animal sciences.
3. Those who put less time in study.
4. Students who studied at home and in the library.
5. Students facing social problems.
6. Those who were employed part-time.

Earlier and Later Enrollees

1. Students with least work experience.
2. Those who shared accommodation.
3. Those who were well satisfied with their academic performance.

Suggestions

Based on the problems experienced by students, the following suggestions were made:

1. Certain adjustments in curriculum planning by the University.
2. Pre-sponsorship orientation training in Malaysia for persons who may have been out of college for some time in a working situation.

The author also recommended that:

1. Students should endeavor to balance their study, social and extra-curricular interests so that they get a well-rounded experience.
2. Comparative studies should be made with students of other nationalities, particularly where cultural differences are more striking.
3. It would give a better picture of the Malaysian students in the United States if similar studies could be made on other campuses.